

## PHENOL

Phenol is widely used in our laboratories. Several past incidents, in which phenol was in use without adequate regard of its hazard potential, have led to dangerous chemical skin burns. All personnel who work with phenol should review this Safetygram and modify procedures accordingly.

Phenol is strongly corrosive to the skin and is systemically toxic if absorbed. Phenol solutions can penetrate even intact skin quite rapidly and can cause severe, potentially even lethal, neurotoxicity. Because of its local anesthetic action, a large amount of phenol may be absorbed through the skin with little immediate pain. Chronic phenol exposure can lead to kidney and liver damage. Phenol burns can result in permanent discoloration of the skin.

Suspected skin or eye contact with phenol calls for immediate action. IMMEDIATELY flush the area with the largest amount of clean water available. The safety shower is recommended for large areas of exposure. While flushing the exposed area, REMOVE ALL ITEMS of contaminated clothing, especially socks and shoes. Keep the exposed area under running water for AT LEAST FIFTEEN MINUTES.

Do not wash the area with alcohol or other organic solvents as this will accelerate the absorption of phenol.

Contact Occupational Health Services (x1096) during working hours as soon as possible after employee exposure to phenol. For cleanup of phenol spills during working hours call EHS (x1451). For after-hours phenol exposures or spills, call Protective Services (x1091).

Proper personal protective equipment for working with phenol includes a fully fastened lab coat, gloves, and safety glasses or goggles. If large volumes of phenol will be used, a full-length rubber apron and face shield will provide greater protection.

For further information or if you have any questions, please call EHS at x1451.